

Mate Crime

People with learning disabilities, autism, mental ill health and older people are particularly vulnerable to 'mate crime': abuse by those they regard as friends. While they might consider

reporting abuse by a stranger, they may be reluctant to report abusive behaviour from someone whose friendship they do not want to lose

Hate crime

Some mate crimes can be classified as 'disability hate crimes', which the Crown Prosecution Service describes as 'a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility towards the victim's

disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity'. Any criminal offence can be a disability hate crime, and when classed as such, the judge can impose a tougher sentence under s.146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003

Victims and abusers

Mate crime involves complex issues. The abuser is likely to be seen as a close friend, carer or family member. They will exploit this relationship, and the victims, who may be

unaware of hidden motives and have less ability to develop and maintain friendships, can end up accepting these unequal relationships

Examples of mate crime

- 'Mates' only turning up on benefits 'payday'
- Being physically beaten for the amusement of 'mates'
- Made to feel worthless and insulted for others entertainment
- Persuaded to perform sexual acts, including on others
- 'Allowing' their homes to be used by others, often for criminal purposes

Indicators of mate crime

- Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance & finances
- Doing what they are told to by a 'friend'
- New 'friends' not respecting the person
- Parties and drug use
- Unexplained injuries
- Disengagement from other social networks
- Unexpectedly short of money, unable to pay bills and / or possessions missing

Spotting and reporting

Mate crime can be hard to recognise and often requires a multi-agency response. Victims are unlikely to come forward due to not recognising the abuse as a crime, a fear of not being

believed, or of repercussions, or a reluctance to report a perceived friend or family member

What to do

Have information? Contact Notts Police on **101** or **999** in an emergency

Families Direct. Tel. **0115 8764800**

Worried about a child? Contact Children and

Worried about an adult? Contact Health and Social Care Point. Tel: **0300 131 0300**